CATHEDRAL MUSIC, *skilfully and religiously performed, a Reasonable Service.*

694.9.6

A

SERMON

Preached in the

Cathedral Church of *Worcester*,

AT THE

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

OF

Worcester, *Gloucester*, and *Hereford* CHOIRS,
September 6, 1743.

Published at their Joint Request.

By *D. BROOKER*, Vicar of St. *Peter*'s in the City of *Worcester*, and Minor Canon of the Cathedral in the said City.

Τῆς μυστικῆς παιδεύσεως ψάλλων ὁμοῦ, καὶ προφητεύων ἐκκλησίᾳ Δαβὶδ, ὑμνῶν τὸν Θεὸν ἐμμελῶς. Clem. Alex. Strom. L. VI.

Περιττὴ δὲ μυστικὴ ἀποπλυσία, ἡ καθαπλώσα τὰς ψυχὰς, καὶ εἰς ποικιλίαν ἐμβάλλουσα, τοτὲ μὲν ἀπόλαυσον καὶ ἡδυπαθῆ, τοτὲ δὲ ἐκβακχευομένην καὶ μανικήν. Ibid.

Ψάλλουσι ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις.——τί ἐστιν;——ἵνα ἀκμὴ ἡ ψυχὴ τῆς γλώττης. S. Chrysost. in Psal. XLI.

LONDON:

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A

SERMON

Preached in the

Cathedral Church of St. Paul,

ON THE

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

OF THE

SOCIETY

FOR THE

PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL

IN

FOREIGN PARTS.

By [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[

PSALM xxxiii. 1, 2, 3.

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye Righteous, for Praise is comely for the Upright.

Praise the Lord with Harp: Sing unto Him with the Psaltery, and an Instrument of ten Strings.

Sing unto Him a new Song: Play skilfully with a loud Voice.

THIS Psalm, as it bears no particular Title in the Original, is judged to be one of those general Hymns, which the Royal Prophet, notwithstanding his Crown and Sceptre, or the Pomp and Splendor of a Court, dedicated many of his Hours to the composing of.

The same Pomp and Hurry were, in all probability, found in those antient, as in more modern Courts: But *David* had escaped their too common Infection. Had he lived in later Times, he might perhaps have undergone a few Strokes of Raillery for his avowed Acknowledgment of, and Dependance upon God; for his Love of the Temple and Delight in the public Worship: But either the World was not altogether so fashionable in those Ages, or, if any of his Attendants were infected with a Spirit of Irreligion and Profaneness, they might perhaps be cautious of spreading their Poison before their Monarch, whose Principles in those Points were already fixed: who professedly gave out, that the very

Terms of being employed in any Place of Truſt or Profit under him were the *leading of a godly Life* *; that he eſteemed it no Derogation from his Royal Dignity to acknowledge, that he acted under the Influence of the Love and Fear of God; and that, however the Crown and Sceptre might glitter in themſelves, yet when they came to be put in the Ballance with the Worſhip of God, he could evidently diſcover them circumſcribed with a *Mene Tekel*: in a word, that he *loved the Habitation of God's Houſe, and the Place where his Honour dwelt* †, and delighted ſometimes to retire from the Hurry and Buſineſs of public Affairs, for the Compoſition of ſacred Hymns for the Service of the Temple, and the Celebration of the Divine Glory.

The Pſalm before us is an Inſtance of this kind, compoſed on no particular Subject, but the general Topics of the Divine Righteouſneſs, Truth, Judgment, Goodneſs, Mercy, Power and Providence; Attributes, which as we are ſinful, as well as weak, and dependent Creatures, we are deeply concerned in; and which, as they naturally tend in this Vale of Want and Imperfection to adminiſter highly to our Comfort and Support, ſo they call aloud for our frequent Returns of humble Supplication, or joyful Praiſe and Celebration.

The great and bleſſed God indeed ſtands not in any Need of the Praiſes of either Angels or Men, for He was eſſentially and ſelf-bleſſed before the Creation of either, and would continue the ſame, were both to be reduced to their primitive Nothing again. It is Matter therefore no leſs of *Wonder* than *Gratitude* to hear the ſelf-bleſſed God, who has innumerable Hoſts of Angels paying Him an eternal and unſullied Act of Praiſe, graciouſly aſſuring us in his ſacred Writings, that, if even *our* Returns of Praiſe are ſincere, He eſteems them,

* Pſalm ci. 6. † Pſalm xxvi. 8.

imperfect as they are, his Glory: *Whoso offereth me Thanks and Praise, he glorifieth me.*[1]

Since then the Almighty is pleased to put such a remarkable Stamp of Dignity on the Praises of such imperfect Creatures, as we are, and is graciously pleased to style them even his Glory; consequently the deeper those grateful Sentiments are impressed upon the Mind, the more acceptable must those Sacrifices of Praise and Thanksgivings be to Him, who is their great Beginning and End, and who regards them *only* as they are the real Overflowings of an Heart sincerely grateful.

It is impossible, when we present ourselves before the Lord, for our Attention to be too deeply fixed, or our Passions, while they continue rational, regular, and free from enthusiastic Flights, to be raised too high. And therefore because it is found by Experience, that a prudent and judicious Assemblage of vocal and instrumental Melody does with respect to the *Majority* of Mankind contribute much to promote this End; because it undeniably moves with a gentle Influence upon the Passions, and has a natural Tendency still to heighten and inflame that Devotion, which the Heart had conceived *before*; for this Reason the Royal Psalmist in the Act of celebrating the Divine Praise recommends (as other Saints of God had done before him) a prudent and decent Use of both.

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye Righteous, for Praise is comely for the Upright.

Praise the Lord with Harp: sing unto him with the Psaltery, and an Instrument of ten Strings.

Sing unto him a new Song: play skilfully with a loud Voice.

In the Words we have,

[1] Psal. l. 23.

First, The great and glorious Being who is the Object of our Praise:——The Lord.

Secondly, The Persons properly qualified to rejoice in, or sing Praises unto him——The Righteous, or the Upright——*Rejoice in the Lord, O ye Righteous, for Praise is comely for the Upright.*

Thirdly, The Recommendation of Vocal and Instrumental Music in the Act of religious Worship:——*Praise the Lord with Harp, sing unto him with the Psaltery, and an Instrument of ten Strings.*

Fourthly, A cautionary Direction for the proper Management and Use of both——*Play skilfully with a loud Voice.*

These things considered will make room, in the *Last Place*, for an Application suitable to our present Solemnity.

The *first* thing, that offers itself to our Consideration from the Words, is the great and glorious Being who is the Object of our Praise. The Lord, who, considered in his natural Attributes mentioned in this Psalm, is He, by the Breath of whose Mouth, *ver.* 6, 7, and 9, *the Heavens were made, and all the Hosts therein: who gathereth the Waters of the Sea together, and layeth up the Deep as in a Treasure House: Who spoke and it was done:*——Who commanded and it stood fast: At whose Word alone, not only inanimate Worlds leaped unto Being from Nothing; but Myriads of angelic Spirits found themselves instantaneously blessed with Existence, Reason, Happiness, Light, and Glory.

If we consider him in his natural and moral Attributes joined together, and ourselves as under high Engagements to, and Expectations from him, and as Objects of his immediate Eye and Care; then it is He, whose Word, *ver.* 4. *is right, and all whose Works are done in Truth:* q. d. All whose Dispensations to the

Sons of Men are, and will be the Effects of absolute Rectitude, and eternal Fidelity, under the Direction of infinite Wisdom—*Who*, ver. 5. *loveth Righteousness and Judgment, and therefore* will *reward it*: Whose Goodness the Earth is full of, and who from the Earth, Sea, and Sky poureth his Benefits upon us from every Side. It is, lastly, He who, *ver.* 10. *looketh down upon* all *the Inhabitants of the Earth, and considereth all their Works*; whose Eye, though it is by the Necessity of his Nature over all his Works, yet, *ver.* 18. is in an especial manner on them that fear him, and put their Trust in his Mercy; to deliver their Soul from Death, and feed them in the Time of Dearth. And here we may not improperly observe, that these exalted Attributes mentioned in this Psalm, are Attributes not only exceeding proper to employ the Prayers and Praises of Beings created and dependent, but agreeably suited likewise to our present Solemnity.

For if the Almighty *doth* look down from Heaven, and behold all the Inhabitants upon Earth; if he *doth* love Righteousness, Mercy, and Judgment; what a rational Comfort may it give this whole Assembly, to reflect, that the Eye of God is at this Instant fixed upon you! that the Father of Mercy and God of all Comfort, whose tender Mercy is over all his Works, is a present and pleased Spectator of this your pious Design; and records, in the Book of his Eternal Mind, to be produced one Day to your momentous Advantage, this Witness of your Love to God whom ye *have not seen*, *by relieving the distressed Creatures of his Image, whom ye do see!* And with regard to those few of this Assembly, who are Expectants of any Assistance from it; lift up the solemn Eye to the God and Father of the Universe, and be suitably affected with correspondent Sentiments of Gratitude, at the general Mercy and Providence of God; who hath inclined the Hearts and

Hands of this crowded Congregation to unite with a pleasing Alacrity, to relieve your Necessities, and soften your Distress: and let this be a Direction for your future Conduct in Life, that in the Day of Adversity you never let go your Dependence upon God; remembering by the Instance of this Society before you (began at first, as I have been informed, to speak in the Language of Men, by mere Accident only) that God has an infinite Variety of Methods, to relieve the Works of his Hands, which lie entirely beyond the Prospect of our limited and contracted Sight.

But to return—— If this then is the natural and moral Character of the God, with whom we have to do,

The *second* Head proposed will follow as a Consequence from hence, that the Persons qualified to rejoice in, or celebrate the Praises of both, must be the Righteous or the Upright only. For if this Character of the Supreme Being is just, alas then for the Unrighteous and Immoral, for the Negligent of God, and Incompassionate to the Distresses of Men! They have no Share or Lot in this Matter! Not an Attribute, whether natural or moral, mentioned through the whole Psalm, but what may fill them with proportionable Terror. Little Comfort can the Reflection on the Superintendency, Power, and Veracity of God, yield to a Sinner, who keeps up no Communication between God and his own Soul; conscious of his having no Interest in the God, thus observant of all his Actions, thus qualified to punish them, and whose Truth and Veracity are deeply concerned to see his Threatnings accomplished. No comfortable Thoughts can arise from the benevolent Mercies of God, to the Man, who, by making *himself* his only Centre, and by endeavouring to confine all the warming Comforts of God to himself, must be sensible, he has no Right or Title to

those precious Promises made to Acts of Mercy and Compassion. No—Ye Righteous only, who rationally witness your Belief in, and Dependence on God by an Imitation of his moral Attributes; ye with the greatest Reason and Propriety may rejoice in God, and laud his Perfections; as having an immediate *Interest* in all the Attributes ye celebrate. Because in the Thought and Language of St. *Paul*, they are all yours, and are each respectively employed to guide you through all the winding Paths of Providence, till they set your Feet upon the everlasting Hills of Glory.

And this with regard to the Assembly in general. But because the Subject of the present Day confines me, I must observe that (unless we uncharitably suppose it impossible for Duty and Inclination to go together) the Words of the Text may as equally be addressed to, and do as equally concern the Performers themselves in the Temple-Worship, as the Audience in general. And indeed, in one Sense, *them* particularly; because (such is the perverse Judgment of the World, who, from Men, will argue to Principles) by how much nearer the Wicked and Immoral, whether Clergy or Laity, stand related to the Service of the Temple, by so much, among the unthinking Crowd, who wait with Eagerness for Opportunities of Blasphemy and Reproach, the Interest of Religion suffers proportionably the greater Damage. Unless Holiness of Life attends the Service of the House of God, it will for ever be looked upon but as personating a Character, and making even a Burlesque of the Sacred Writings themselves. For as the Righteous only have a reasonable Foundation to rejoice in God, so indeed are they only qualified to sing his Praise, an Act comely only for the Upright. And if so, the Rule will indisputably hold on the other Side, that even the very Praises of God must appear uncomely and indecent, in being, as it were, polluted by the Mouths of the Wicked

and

and Profane. When the Almighty is mournfully addreſſed *to hear our Voice out of the Deep* *, however judiciouſly calculated the Sounds may be to raiſe ſuitable Paſſions and Affections, yet how do they loſe their Energy, when breathed forth by a Man, who lives without God in the World, who never really invokes the Supreme Being at all, nor ever intends that God ſhould hear his Voice but in the Way of his Employment only! Is not a conſiderable Share of the Delightfulneſs, as well as Solemnity of the religious Act abated, to hear the Melody expreſſing *Joy and Gladneſs*, *in going up to the Houſe of the Lord* †, proceed from the Man, who in the other Parts of Life gives ſo much Reaſon to ſuſpect, that he is rather pleaſed when the Service of God is *finiſhed*, and himſelf is retreating from it? But when the Melody of the Divine Praiſe is hymned out by a Soul rightly tuned, and ſenſible of the Sentiments before they break out into his Voice, the holy Affection inſenſibly diffuſes itſelf around, while the fixed Attention of the Congregation expreſſes their Intereſtedneſs in the Subject. And that it is not impoſſible for a true Zeal for God and the Service of the Choir to go Hand in Hand, we have two eminent Inſtances in Biſhop *Burnet*'s Hiſtory of the Reformation, who witneſſed their Deteſtation of Popery, and expreſſed their Zeal for the pure Religion of *Jeſus*, by expoſing themſelves to the Death; one of whom actually underwent the bloody Baptiſm, and from praiſing God in the Choir, was ſtrengthened to praiſe him in the Fires.

If a ſimilar Concern for Religion burned in the Breaſts of others, whom Providence has allotted to this Part of Life, they would find their Account in the Eſtimation they would meet with from the more ſober and thinking Part of Mankind; for whatever Pride and

* Pſalm cxxx. 1. † Pſalm cxxii. 1.

Profaneneſs

Profaneness may think, yet *no Employment in the immediate Service of God can possibly in itself be mean*: And did they constantly act under this Principle, that their moral Conduct out of the Temple was to be consistent with the Nature of their Employment in it, their Voices would be esteemed more valuable than the Breath of the Organ, and their Persons considered in a much higher Light than a mere musical Instrument.

It were to be wished therefore, that these Attendants on Divine Service would esteem themselves dedicated, as it were, to this Service. For if even the Vessels, dedicated to the Use of the Temple, are represented in Scripture as having a *relative Holiness* * stamped directly upon them, and as immediately set apart from public or profane Use, why should not the rational Instruments of the House of God be esteemed relatively holy likewise? Nor would it, in the Event, be prejudicial to their temporal Interest to reverence themselves so far, as to esteem themselves above common Use; and that it is below their Vocation to be instantaneously and submissively subservient to the Call of every richer Man, who, notwithstanding any Pretext of Friendship, or Colour of Invitation, uses them too often as his Servants, or Decorations to his Entertainment; and invites them chiefly to administer to the Pleasure of his Guests.

I pretend not to say, it is morally evil in the immediate Servants of Divine Worship to appear sometimes at Entertainments; or even, under proper Limitations, to oblige a well regulated Society: But, this I must say, should they suffer themselves to be prevailed upon to gratify an Audience, that they are under great Obligations, not only to keep from Intemperance themselves, but to be strictly cautious, that the Subject-matter

* Numb. xvi. 38. Dan. v. 3.

of their Performance be ſuch, as has not the leaſt, even diſtant Tendency either to Looſeneſs or Immorality, or to heighten that Exceſs, which, without great Care and Circumſpection, is on all public Entertainments but too frequent: Not to heighten, I ſay, becauſe if Devotion may be heightened by Sounds ſuitably adapted, by the ſame Parity of Reaſon may be heightened the Flames of irregular Luſts and Paſſions. Not to mention the extreme Uncomelineſs and Impropriety, that the Mouth, which is ſo often filled with the Praiſes of the God of Heaven and Earth, ſhould be unhallowed with the Praiſes of the heathen Gods of Wine and Luſt; by which two Subjects the ſacred Innocency of Muſic is ſo often contaminated, and being ſtripped of her native Robe of Innocence, is attired with the Habit of an Harlot. The Voice of Man was never given him to ſing Songs to the Devil, nor to raiſe that *warring Law** in the animal Body, which St. *Paul*, and every thinking Man complains of, and which, *without* Incentives, he finds Work enough to ſtruggle with, and bring it into Subjection to the Law of God. What have Chriſtians to do with the Praiſes of a lewd *Venus*, or an intemperate *Bacchus*? It is pretended, I am ſenſible, that it is only the God of Wine, or the God of Love, Expreſſions juſtified by the Rules of Poetry: Yet I cannot help thinking, that ſuch frequent Occurrence, in thoſe Ditties, of the very *Words*, *God*, *Heaven*, *Hell*, *Soul*, and *Bleſſedneſs*, hath a natural and immoral Tendency to familiarize thoſe ſolemn Names too much to the Ear, and perhaps contributes not a little to the taking away that reverential Regard, which ought to be eternally on our Minds, whenever thoſe awful Subjects, and the tremendous Name of God himſelf, are mentioned.

* Rom. vii. 23.

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It is, I apprehend, for such Reasons as these why the *worthy Bishop of London*, notwithstanding all the specious Pretences, that Play-Houses may be in themselves innocent, nay, useful and instructive; has nevertheless, consistent with the Episcopal Character, wisely ordered, that the Performers in the sacred Service of God's House should never appear as Performers in those Temples of Lewdness and Profaneness, where the above-named Subjects are, with as much Frequency as Blasphemy, applied to sinful and perishing Dust and Ashes, and profanely employed chiefly in making carnal and sensual Comparisons: where a Disappointment in a lewd Intrigue shall be often in their Songs and Interludes compared to the Terrors of Hell, and Success in it, to nothing less than the Joys of Heaven: and lastly, where the Name of God, in Defiance of all Laws divine and human, is fearfully blasphemed, but where it is too evident, his Fear is not.

From the Consideration of the Persons qualified either to rejoice in, or raise the Hymn to God, the Psalmist next proceeds to the Hymn itself, and the manner of its Performance——*Praise the Lord with Harp—Psaltery—Instrument of ten Strings—Sing unto the Lord a new Song, play skilfully with a loud Voice.* Where he not only recommends the

Third Thing proposed from the Words, the Use of Vocal and Instrumental Music in Divine Worship, but adjoins an oblique Direction for the proper Use and Management of both.

That *Vocal Music*, in the Worship of God, is a Service useful as well as reasonable, no less a Duty than a Delight; this is in a manner agreed on by Christians of all Denominations whatever: One Sect of Men only excepted, whose Worship seems perversely and designedly studied how to *differ* as wide as possible from all

other Chriſtians, both in Sentiments and Mode of Worſhip. Theſe only excepted, Vocal Muſic in Divine Worſhip is allowed, and approved of by all. The Example of *Chriſt*, at his taking that laſt and ſolemn Leave of his Diſciples before his Entrance into the Garden of Agony; the Practice of the primitive Chriſtians, delivered down to us by the Teſtimony of *Pliny*, ſent as a Spy into their Chriſtian Aſſemblies; and I add one thing more, the Incarnation Hymn itſelf *literally ſung* by Angels at the Introduction of the Redeemer of the World into it, all theſe are undeniable Proofs of its Lawfulneſs, Uſe, and Holineſs. The moſt common Objection is, againſt the Introduction of *Inſtrumental* Muſic into the Church of God. But I reſt the Matter wholly here, that if the End and Deſign of ſinging Praiſes to God at all, is to enflame and carry devout Affections to a greater Height, for the very ſame Reaſons, whatever has a Tendency to render that Singing more harmonious, regular, and perfect, muſt conſequently have a natural Tendency to raiſe the Devotion ſtill higher: and therefore (unleſs it can be proved, that Devotion is rendered leſs valuable by being more heightened and enflamed) the very ſame Reaſon which juſtifies the Act of Singing in general, will juſtify likewiſe the joining Inſtrumental Muſic with it. And that it is no unacceptable Sacrifice, even God himſelf gave a remarkable Indication, at the ſolemn Dedication of *Solomon*'s Temple; where, at the inſtant the Trumpeters began, as one, to lift up their Voices with the Trumpets, the *Shechinah*, or Cloud of Glory, immediately filled the Houſe. I would not be miſunderſtood, as if I could imagine, that the Aſſemblage of Inſtruments and Voices were any ways the effective Cauſe of the Glory's Appearance; but it undoubtedly proves what I intended it ſhould prove, *viz.* that the praiſing the Supreme Being in this manner

her received a Stamp of Approbation from God himſelf.

I am ſenſible this was under the legal Diſpenſation; but it does not follow, that every Rite under the Legal Diſpenſation muſt neceſſarily diſcontinue under the Evangelic. God himſelf enjoined the *Jews* to write his Commands upon their Poſts and Gates *; and if the ſame Cuſtom ſhould be continued *now*, and we ſhould occaſionally read our Duties on the Walls of our Chambers, it might perhaps anſwer ſome wiſe Ends in an Hour of Temptation; but could no more be charged with *Judaizing*, than our inſcribing them on the Walls of our Churches.

That bloody Sacrifices and Circumciſion were indeed only Shadows of better Things to come, is abundantly evident, not only from their being ceaſed; but becauſe they cannot be uſed *now*, as an eſſential Act of the *Chriſtian* Religion, without renouncing *Chriſtianity*. If Sacrifices are ſtill neceſſary, then the great Sacrifice of the World has not been offered: And we are told by an inſpired Apoſtle, *that if we are circumciſed, i. e.* as eſſential to *Chriſtianity*, *Chriſt ſhall profit us nothing* †. But the Uſe of Inſtrumental Melody in the Church of *Chriſt* affects no Part of *Chriſtianity* in this Senſe; the Syſtem of *Chriſtianity* is the ſame with it, as without it. In the midſt of the moſt en-

* Deut. vi. 9.

† St. *Paul* indeed circumciſed *Timotheus*, *Acts* xvi. 2. not from any Perſuaſion of its neceſſary Continuance under the Goſpel, but for prudential Reaſons: becauſe of the *Jews*, the Text ſays, who were in thoſe Quarters.—— It is a neat Turn of St. *Chryſoſtom* on this Paſſage, becauſe founded on the Text, περιέτεμεν ἵνα περιτομὴν καθέλῃ, *circumcidit, ut circumciſionem tolleret*. For though Numbers of the *Jews* had embraced the *Chriſtian* Faith, they were not yet quite ſettled in the *Liberty* of the Goſpel; but retained, even ſtill, ſuch Hankerings after their legal Rites, that St. *Paul* well knew, if *Timotheus* had not been circumciſed, he would have made but an inconſiderable Number of Proſelytes, and have been but inattentively heard by thoſe, who were ſo already.

rapturing

rapturing Sounds, I can admire the Wonders, and own the Neceſſity of redeeming Grace, and can warm my Heart not only with the tranſporting Thoughts of having an Advocate with the Father, but with the bleſſed Hopes of ſeeing him hereafter, and praiſing him Face to Face. If therefore it *is* a Shadow of good things to come, it is a Shadow of one of the *beſt* things to come, *viz.* of our future Employment itſelf in Heaven; where we ſhall ſing the Song of the Lamb, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power; for thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us with with thy Blood* *.—To this, another thing may not improperly be obſerved of the legal Rites of bloody Sacrifices and Circumciſion; that theſe are things between which, and the human Paſſions, there is naturally no manner of Relation. It is reaſonable to believe, that without a Tradition derived from Revelation, the human Nature had been entirely a Stranger to the former, and abhorrent of the latter. But the Love of Harmony, whether Vocal or Inſtrumental, or both, is ſo *general*, that our great Former ſeems to have interwoven it with our very Natures. Hence we read ſo early as in the fourth Chapter of *Geneſis*, long before the Inſtitution of the *Moſaic* Law, of Harps and Organs. Hence we read again, in the thirty-firſt Chapter, of Vocal and inſtrumental Melody joined together as cuſtomary, and in Practice.—*Why*, ſaid *Laban* to *Jacob, didſt thou flee away ſecretly, and didſt not tell me, that I might have ſent thee away with Mirth and, with Songs, with Tabret and with Harp?* Hence we read in the laſt place, before the *Jewiſh* Law, of the † Application of both, in celebrating the Divine Praiſe; ſo early did thoſe remote Ages of the World diſcover its Influences in general, and its natural Tendency not

* Rev. iv. 11. † Exod. xv.

only

only to dispose the Mind for religious Attention and holy Reverence, but to enflame it in the Act itself. It is *now*, in *our Times*, productive of, and will for *ever continue* to have the same happy Effects, so long as we are compounded of the Animal, as well as the Spiritual; and therefore may be reasonably, usefully, and religiously continued in the Church of God below, till that Time, when we shall come to the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven: When, I say, it may reasonably, usefully, and religiously be continued, it is plain, I have no Intention to carry it up to an extravagant Height of Necessity. We make no scruple to acknowledge, that God may be worshipped in Spirit and Truth *without* it, provided it is granted us on the other hand, that He may likewise be worshipped in Spirit and Truth *with* it. In like manner the Almighty dwelleth not, nor ever did, in Temples made with Hands; yet we find, this was no Objection in the Divine Mind, why either King *Solomon*, or the present People of God, should not erect and consecrate Temples to his immediate Glory and Worship. All that I would infer from hence is, that as God has created the Ear for Harmony, and consequently Harmony for the Ear, and has fashioned us in his unerring Wisdom in such a manner, as that *the greater Part* of Mankind *shall be* tenderly touched and influenced *in this manner*, it discovers something of a sour and contracted Spirit in those, whose different Constitution gives them no Relish for it, to pass uncharitable Censures upon those Means, which are *sensibly found* to raise the Affections, and kindle the Souls of others, their Fellow *Christians*, into a reverential Joy, when they hear a full Choir emblemizing the Courts of Heaven with *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Sabbaoth!* And we do make the Appeal to the Serious among the *generality* of Mankind, whether upon hearing

ing the ſacred Hymn, decently raiſed to the Almighty, properly executed in Sounds deſcriptive of the Senſe, and in the Language of the Text, *played with a loud Voice ſkilfully*, they do not feel in themſelves that reverential Pleaſure, which they nor I can well deſcribe, and which confeſſedly approaches nearer to Spirit than any other Pleaſure which we *can* receive, while in theſe groſs Tabernacles of Clay?

Swell then, ye Organs, ceaſe not, ye ſtringed Inſtruments, nor be ye ſilent, ye loud Voices, to hymn the Praiſe of the great Creator, Governour, Redeemer, and Judge of Men. But let us remember the cautionary Direction of the Pſalmiſt, which was the

Fourth Thing propoſed from the Words, that it be done ſkilfully. Set all the Springs of Melody on work, if you pleaſe; awake all her inmoſt Powers; let the Voice and the Hand exert their utmoſt Cunning in his Praiſe that taught the one to breathe, and the other to move. But as there is ſuch a thing, as an unſkilful Application of even Skill itſelf, let not the *Object* of our Worſhip vaniſh from the Eye, or wander from the Thought. Let not the Walls of the ſacred Temple hear the vague, deſultory, and wanton Airs of a Theatre. Let not the tremendous Majeſty of God be implored, or praiſed, in the unmeaning Strains of a thoughtleſs Levity, nor in ſuch as may create any Suſpicion, that the *Muſic*, not the *Worſhip*, was the principal thing that engaged our Preſence and Attention. But let it be ſkilful in the full Senſe of the Word. Skilful in reſpect of its Performance and Execution *, ſkilfully ſuited to the Dignity of the Sub-

* This is certainly one intended Senſe of the Text, and ſo underſtood by the LXX. καλῶς ψάλλειν. The Original is *verbatim*, *Do well to play*, including not only the moral Act of Praiſe, but Skill and Execution in

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ject; and, above all, ſuch as may diſcover, we are under the moſt reverential Sentiments of the Majeſty we either praiſe or implore.

The playing *ſkilfully with a loud Voice*, is not to ſhew the Swiftneſs of the Hand ſweeping over the numerous Make of an Organ; the mere Melody or Volubility of the Voice, or Strength of the Lungs; but *expreſſively to deſcribe*, and *religiouſly to influence*. Tunes may not be improperly called *audible Paintings*; they are to the Ear, what Pictures are to the Sight; and, unleſs Nature and Deſcription reign through both, the Ear will be as quickly tired with the ſweeteſt Sounds, as the Eye with the injudicious Spread, though of the brighteſt Colours.

If the Almighty was to be implored * *to rebuke us not in his Indignation*, or *heal the Bones which he has broken*, however loud the Voice, or accurate the Performance, yet moſt Men are *naturally* Muſicians enough to know, it would not be playing *ſkilfully* on thoſe Occaſions, ſhould we run like Lightning through the whole Scale of the Gamut; break out into repeated Fugues, or ſplit thoſe Words into numberleſs Diviſions, which in their own Nature require a Movement mournfully grave, and ſolemnly complaining.

If the Redeemer of the World is *aſcending up on high, and leading Captivity captive* †, ill-judged would be the Strain, which, inſtead of lifting up the Mind to follow the triumphant Victor into Heaven, ſhould deſcribe that aſcending Jubilee by Sounds, more pro-

the Performance. See the following parallel Paſſages, which can admit of no other Senſe; 1 *Sam.* xvi. 17. *And* Saul *ſaid unto his Servant, Provide me a Man*— מֵיטִיב לְנַגֵּן *bene ſcientem pulſare fides.* So *Ezek.* xxxiii. 32. *Iſa.* xxiii. 16.

* Pſal. vi. † Pſalm lxviii. 18.

perly deſcriptive of his *bowing the Heavens, and coming down to diſcover the Foundations of the World* *.

But allowing the Compoſition excellent, and the Performance equal, yet the Work of religious Muſic is imperfect *ſtill*; for what muſt eſſentially finiſh its Character is, when to the Melody of the Voice and Hand is joined the Melody of the *Soul*. Sounds may be ſo happily contrived, as to put the whole animal Frame into a *rapturous* Motion, and ſo expreſſive of the Words too, as in ſome Senſe to entertain the *reaſoning Faculties*: yet if Tranſport ariſes from *mere Harmony*, or even *mere Propriety*, and carries us no farther, it is no Act of Devotion; it is a Pleaſure found even in thoſe, who are often Strangers to God and the Spirit of Religion; it is mere *animal Pleaſure ſtill*, and a lively Deſcription of the *Jews* of old, † *Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely Song of one that hath a pleaſant Voice, and can play well on an Inſtrument; for they hear thy Words, but do them not.* But the true Melody of Devotion is, when we uſe it as a Means of aſpiring more and more after the Employment of Heaven itſelf, and of firing ourſelves with ſtronger Deſires of that Time, when we ſhall mix with the celeſtial Choir of Cherubims and Seraphims, and make with them one undivided Company to ſurround the Throne, and praiſe the Wonders of creating and redeeming Mercy in the World above. *This* is playing *ſkilfully*, becauſe it is Melody joined with Wiſdom. And where this End is not propoſed, the moſt exquiſite Performances (however they may tickle human Ears) are, in the Mind of God, but as ſounding Braſs, and the Performers themſelves but as

* Pſalm xviii. 9, 15. † Ezech. xxxiii. 32.

tinkling

tinkling Cymbals. But where the Heart and Hand go in this heavenly Concert together, it is a noble Employment, a lively Emblem of Heaven itself, as described in the Scriptures, where the celestial Inhabitants cease not Day and Night with * *Harps to sing Praises unto Him, that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever.* And though we stand not for the *Letter* of Harps in Heaven, yet this Use may be fairly made of that Expression, that it would not be consistent with the Character of the Sacred Writings, nor indeed with the Wisdom of God himself, to have permitted the Blessedness of the Upper World to have been described in the *Revelation of his Will*, by any thing immoral in, or improper for, the Use of his Church below.

But I must draw to a Conclusion; and therefore shall only observe, that if this Mode of Worship, performed in a decent Manner and holy Sincerity, is a reasonable Service, and acceptable to God in the general; then, which was the

Last Thing proposed, How particularly acceptable must the Occasion of *this* present Solemnity be? The very End and Design of which is, to promote the Glory of God, the most exalted and noble Way which we can possibly promote it in; *viz.* in relieving the distressed Creatures of his Image, which the Almighty Father of the Universe has annexed such distinguishing Promises to, and which he has solemnly declared, he does, and will esteem his Glory to be particularly promoted by.

* Rev. v. 8.

Bleſſed be God, that awful and heavy Charge againſt the *Jews* of old, cannot be laid againſt this preſent Aſſembly, that * *the Harp, and the Viol, and the Wine are in their Feaſts, but they regard not the Work of the Lord, nor conſider the Operations of his Hands.* No; our principal Deſign is this very Thing, *To* regard the Works of the Lord, and *To* conſider the Operations of his Hands; to act in Obedience to one of the higheſt Commands of God, and reſemble him in his amiable and moral Attributes of Mercy and Compaſſion. The Deſign of our *preſent Singing* is to make the Heart of the *Widow ſing*, to prevent her Tears, and turn her Mourning into Joy; and that out of the Mouths of her *Babes and Sucklings may be proclaimed the Praiſe of God.*

I need not, I apprehend, multiply Texts, before a *Chriſtian* Audience. I ſhall only make a ſerious Appeal to every Man's private Breaſt, Whether he is not verily perſuaded, that, when the Hour is come in which the Earth, and all that is therein, ſhall be melting down in the general Conflagration, the Remembrance, that on ſuch a time I contributed ſuch a Portion of the Subſtance God had given me, to the Relief of any diſtreſſed Family, will not ſtand him in much more ſtead, and yield him infinitely more Satisfaction, than any or *all* of the *animal Enjoyments* received through the whole Circuit of his former Life in the Fleſh.

Think, *Chriſtian*, think, what Pleaſure glorious and unſpeakable will ſpring up in thee in that awful Scene, when, directing thine Eye to the glowing Orb, thou wilt be able to break out in triumphant Language of

* Iſa. v. 12.

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the Scripture, * *Melt down, thou Earth; fall down, ye Stars from Heaven; dissolve, ye Elements, with fervent Heat.* —— I have no Treasure among you; this Time I foresaw, and have had the Prudence long ago to lay up my Treasures far beyond the Reach of your Flames. They are *already* secured in the sacred Repository of God, and insured to me by the Sign and Seal of Heaven itself.

These Occasions, therefore, are not to be looked upon as so many *unlucky Accidents* putting us upon a *needless* Expence, but should be esteemed (as they really are in themselves) gracious Instances of God's *Mercy* to us, providentially and *designedly* put in our Ways, to give us a favourable and blessed Opportunity of laying up a *second Stock* of Treasures, which will remain eternal in the Heavens, after our *first Stock* is consumed in the general Conflagration of all Things here below.

If such a Situation is so desirable in the *Prospect*, then let *Prudence*, as well as Religion, persuade us to put ourselves in those Circumstances *now* which we shall wish to be found in *then*, when nothing will be *able* to bring us any Comfort but the Remembrance of those Acts, by which the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind, have been promoted by us, when on Earth.

But what am I doing? I am weakly using Motives for promoting this pious Design before an Audience, who, I am persuaded, want none; who came hither with this very *Design*; and who, I am afraid, think I detain them too long from the Divine Pleasure which springs up in the Soul after all Acts of Mercy

* 2 Pet. iii. 10.

and

and Compaſſion, and from hearing the ſ[illegible] raiſed unto that God, who is the Beginning [illegible] of all Worſhip, even Him, who in the affectio[nate] and exalted Language of the Pſalmiſt is a Fathe[r] to the Fatherleſs, and defendeth the Cauſe of the Widow, even God in his holy Habitation.

To whom, with the Son and Holy Ghoſt, be all Honour and Glory for ever. Amen.

FINIS.